COL. COLL.
LIBRARY
N. YORK

THE

AERONAUT.

No. 92. August 19. 1817.

Fama manet; fortuna perit:—
EP. AUCT. INCERT.

Her fortunes perished, still her fame survives— ANON.

An ancient manuscript, in the Chaldee tongue, was dug up about ~~forty~~ years ago, by some labourers who were at work near Babylon. The French antiquarians have had innumerable disputations respecting its antiquity; but with them, we shall not at present trouble ourselves. The

writer was evidently attached to the religion of Zoroaster, which may make him accordding to the different opinions of the learned, either contemporary with Daniel, or with Moses and Sanchoniatho, or long before them both, as Voltaire supposes possible. Other internal evidence, however, contradicts such an hypothesis.

The MS. states, that at the distance of nine parasangs from Babylon, on the other side of the Tigris, there was a town, called Nogerhon, pleasantly situation on the stream Rages. The people were all attached to the idol Belshegor in their hearts, but did not dare to acknowledge it. It appears, they were a cantering, lying, scurrilous, pilfering, backbiting set, given up in their souls to lust and all uncleanness, but without making so much noise about their goodness, and abusing each other so fiercely in private, that the Babylonians sometimes thought they were on the point of being invaded by an army

of Jerusalem jackasses, and at others that all the snakes were coming out of Mount Elymaei, with the locusts that kept in the marsh between their city and that of Nogrod.

"Now" says the author "I will discourse touching these Nogrodians, in a fourfold light. First I will consider the nature of the site and of the atmosphere; secondly the corresponding temperament of the inhabitants; thirdly, the schools for scurrility and lying; fourthly, their religion.

I. And first, was there not a great swamp, occasioned by the inundation of the Tigris, which kept the country between Babylon and Nogrod in a pestilential state, where that wild beast on a small scale, called by the Egyptians locusts, but by the Chaldeans Mocksiton, did breed most extravagantly? Did not the original pair of them, as the descendants of Braun assert, come out of Adam's left navel, with all sorts of profligacy? By the bill of these polypods, the chain is fear-

=fully inflamed, and the more the Nogo=
=dians scratched, the more they itched.
And was not their woe in summer so hid=
=den by a fog of dust, that the sneezing was
heard at Nineveh? Or, when the Pleiads
prevailed, was it not so muddy, that it
rotted all the sandals, by reason whereof
the manufactories did greatly thrive, and
cobblers came from the very heart of Egypt
to learn their trade at Nogrod?

Secondly, touching the humours of this
people; the dust clouded their intellects,
and they said every thing wrong end fore=
=most. By being bitten so constantly by
the wild polypeda aforesaid, they
grew cross; and were in a constant state
of irritation. Large gangrenes bred and
festered in their wives; and they became
so obnoxious to the olfactories of their
neighbours, that when the wind blew
from the east, the Babylonians shut
up the city gates and closed their casa=

-ces. This is the wind, which yet blows from the ruins of that place, and goes south westwardly until it sweeps the deserts of Arabia, destroying all animal and vegetable life. Their manufactories made them desperately mean, from which circumstances it resulted that,

Thirdly, they were proverbially scandalous. No one dared go near them, when he could by any means avoid it. If a decent looking person sojourned within their gates, they reported him for a sharper; if he refreshed himself with the liquor of the vine, it was poured and sworn that he was drunk to desperation; if he traded with them, they said he had stolen valuables; if he looked about him, he was a spy; if he brought things, he had the plague. A Babylonian going there one day formed from their information, that the pestilence had destroyed three fourths of the inhabitants of his city, that his two sons had been executed for theft, and his wife and three

daughters ravished - when he had just left them all in good health and condition.

As they spared no one else, so neither did they refrain from abusing the people of their own town. The scandal was carried about by women, and retailed among the men; but the former took all the trouble of supporting it, upon themselves. When they quarrelled with each other, they tore off all their petticoats, pulled out each other's hairs, scratched out their eyes, shed their teeth and kicked out their intrails. The saliva thrown out on these occasions was collected by the physicians and was the most mortal poison known in the East. The malefactors who were condemned to take it, were thrown into such loathing, that before they died, there was nothing left of them but skin and dry bones.

There was a committee of twelve women selected by measuring the circumference of

their bodies. Three yards round, intitled them to a seat in the Council of Character, the chief of which deputation was the priestess in one of the temples. This female was called "the priest" – for her husband was entirely hidden when he walked along side of her, and they looked like Mount Caucasus with an ass grazing on the sides. She kept him quite under, and sometimes officiated in the temple in his place; at others she would send him there dressed up in her petticoats.

This Council met every day; they invented three hundred and thirty three lies at each sitting, and deputed three of the Tribe, to go about and see their inventions propagated. Accordingly they repaired to their friends and acquaintances, and to their male coadjutors. They had some way of rewarding the latter for their services, without the world's knowing it; which tradition hath not narrated. They requested them "to say" this and that, of such a person, as a matter

of common curtesy.

It appears from the MS. that this system was as common as that of the merchants of the day; when this Council drew bills on the character of any person, they asked their neighbours to indorse them; "will you be so good as to say, that Naham killed his wife"; or "that Chedorlaomer committed sacrilege in the temple, with the concubine of Phelim;" and it was considered want of politeness to refuse.

This council, the author goes on to state, gave permits to their fraternity, which preserved the sanctity and inviolability of their repositories. They allowed them to let young Mogrodian gentlemen sleep at the foot of their beds, when they were so much in love with each other to be separated for a longer time.

Thus they kept up their authority, with absolute dominion; if an innocent young maiden who would not prostitute any of the 333 daily falsehoods, was

addressed by a young man, took any notice of him, suffered him to sing under her balcony, or friendly, if she walked with him, they gave her up to the great-Dragon as an abominable courtezan. And, among other instances, says the author, a Negro-dian woman miscarried nine times and died a maid.

Fourthly. They were the most hypo-critical set; as to religion, of all the Magi, Brahmins, Seers and Faquirs and Dervishes of the East. They yelled and kicked and sang and scrambled in the temples; they held nightly orgies, where they profaned Baal and Bram, in their hearts, always; and bodily, at other times, being full of rotten concupiscence. They canted when any one was by, and talked most-devoutly, at improper times and seasons; so that all strangers sickened at hearing them, and vomited desperately. They worried chil-dren into fits, and then said they were

inspired, reporting their ravings as pro-
-phecies; and foretold the destruction of
the Assyrian army, from the blubbe-
-rings of a baby, that had the dysente-
-ry.

There was a great prophet among
them, esteemed a very good man; only he
introduced the worship of Ops, whom
the Egyptians call Iseth or Isis - and
believed, as that sect asserted, that the Mer-
-kitor before mentioned, came out of Brama's
navel, instead of Adimo's, whereat I,
with many others, was sorely scandalized.
This prophet however, had not been long
among them, before they accused him of
improper intercourse, with Egyptian slaves,
simply because, in the simplicity of his
heart he used to coax the females of the
place, when he saw them innocent and
happy. They abused him until they
drove him away; and he went to Athens
where they all worshipped Ops. He came
however back again, and prophecied har-
-der than ever.

There also came a young, crazy prophet among them, who wandered over the East hearing all the seers he and afterwards venting their predictions as his own. He was courteous and Comely; and all the the females of Nogrod crowded to hear him in public, and ran after him in private. He travelled into Canaan, and took him a wife there; then the Nogrodians accused him of lying, stealing, blasphemy, concupiscence and murder. They found him out retailing the prophecies of a Chaldean soothsayer, and then he went up to Nineveh. As he was once exhorting the people there, the prophet Jonas came along, and was struck dumb with astonishment when he heard a repetition of what he had told the Jews some years before. He expired the same day, and was carried out of the gate.

The MS. states, that the Nogrodians increased in lying, hypocrisy and filthi-

: ness; until one day, the Tigris burst-
over its bounds and the steam Rages.
overflowed their town. They became isolated
amidst pestilential vapours, the buzzing
of the insects, decayed and putrid bodies
and their own loathsomeness urged temfold
greater, until they all perished of famine
& disease. The priests and consul got
on top of the temple to pray, when they
laid down and died by inches, their tongues
hanging out and wagging to the last.

"Take warning" concludes the author "ye
nations, from the fate of Nineveh. Is it not writ-
-ten in the Zend, "This is most pleasing to heaven,
to cultivate the earth, water it and multiply
vegetation, to have numerous flocks, young
and fruitful virgins and a multitude of chil-
dren"? Let all therefore, men, women, chil-
-dren and Taylors labour in their different
vocations, without troubling themselves with
any affairs but their own!"

S.